



TexTESOL III Newsletter

Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

April 2007

www.textesol.org/region3

Letter from the President

“How can we best serve our members?” we thought. As the TexTESOL III Board of Directors, we wanted to provide our members with more than just an annual conference in the same city. We wanted to reach out to the entire region. Through suggestions from our members and innovative ideas from TESOL, TexTESOL III has found a number of ways to strengthen the organization, benefiting its members through networking socials and workshops. Our aim is to promote ESL and all of its branches, provide teachers and administrators with resources and tools to help them succeed professionally, and create a web of support and friendship throughout the region. It is my pleasure to introduce the ideas we have collected that originated with professionals like you.

Networking Socials

This past March, TexTESOL III hosted our first Networking Social at the International High School/Johnston High School in Austin, Texas. We had a delightful turnout of professionals representing various sectors of the ESL profession: Adult Education, IEP, and K-12. Participants engaged in dialogue about a number of issues and concerns, and many suggestions were made on how TexTESOL III could serve its members. We would like to present a series of networking socials, every other month, continuing to offer opportunities for ESL professionals from all branches of our field to meet, discuss, and support each other at social gatherings. Our next planned event will be in San Marcos on Friday, May 18th - *Inter-Communication in the ESL World!* We will provide resources and tips primarily for Adult Education and K-12 professionals, allowing these two sides of the same

coin to gain perspective about each other's student populations, which oftentimes may come from the same household. This social is open to everyone, however, and we encourage you to come and meet colleagues with like interests. We hope to see many of you there!

Workshops

TexTESOL III covers quite a large terrain, including Regional Education Services Centers 12, 13, and 15. Geographically, we extend from Del Rio to San Angelo, Corsicana to Seguin, including Waco, Temple, Killeen, Austin, San Marcos, and the Hill Country. In our effort to reach out to the whole of our constituency, TexTESOL III will be providing a number of workshops and seminars around these areas on a number of professional development topics. Proposed topics include refugee issues, supporting and funding college-bound immigrant students, advocacy in adult

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education, improving speaking instruction, shifting classroom dynamics, and tips for proposing and presenting at conferences. TextESOL III is a Continuing Professional Education Provider (through the Texas State Board of Educator Certification), so our workshops will further your professional development in more ways than one. If you would like to assist in the organization or presentation of a TextESOL III workshop, or if you would like to suggest a topic for a workshop or seminar, please contact us at kfouche@austin.utexas.edu.

Regional Fall Conference

TextESOL III is looking forward to its Regional Fall Conference on Saturday, October 13, 2007 in Austin, Texas. Although the details are still being molded, we envision the day to unfold as follows. The morning line-up begins with "Mentoring Magic: Promoting Interaction between K-12 and IEPs" by Tracy Frank from ESL Services at UT Austin, and continues with Morning Poster Sessions. Our afternoon will kick off with our Keynote Speaker and former TESOL President, Neil Anderson, author of the ACTIVE Reading Skills Series. To complete the day, TextESOL III will hold its Annual Business Meeting, where it will hold elections for the Board of Directors, listen to new business proposed by members, and discuss any proposed amendments to the Constitution. Our Fall Reception will follow with music and discussion.

It is my sincere hope that you will participate in these planned events, whether attending, presenting, or volunteering. In our profession, our best resources for support and development are each other. On behalf the TextESOL III Board of Directors, a committed and encouraging group, I look forward to forging relationships with all who promote the concept that second language learning is not merely an ancillary, but a significant bridge of understanding and communication between cultures.

Sincerely,

Katherine Fouché
ESL Instructor
TextESOL III President

Mark Your Calendar

May 18 (Friday)

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Inter-Communication in the ESL World
Adult Education, K-12, and all ESL Professionals

Location: TBA by May 1

Please check website for updates: www.textesol.org/region3



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Speaking Buddies

by Manuel Raymond

How do you break the invisible linguistic and cultural barriers between ELL (English Language Learners) and their regular education teachers while, at the same time, raising the self-esteem of our ELL students and improving the academic environment of your campus?

At Akins High School in Austin, our ELL students are teaching Spanish to our faculty and staff. Teacher volunteers not only get the benefit of learning Spanish from a native speaker, but they also get the convenience of having a Speaking Buddy (participating ELL student) arrive at that teacher's classroom for a 15-minute Spanish lesson once per week during a conference period.

The Spanish lessons are designed to help teachers interact with their ELL students. For example, the objective of the first lesson is to get to know a new ELL student who has just been placed in the teacher's class. The teacher learns how to ask basic questions: what's your name, may I see your schedule, do you speak or write in English, etc. In the second lesson, the Speaking Buddy interviews the teacher, and the teacher answers the questions in Spanish. In both lessons, teachers and students are breaking barriers and learning from each other.

Since teachers are at different levels of speaking proficiency and since teachers teach different academic classes, Spanish is individualized for each teacher. Teachers may use their Speaking Buddy to learn whatever they want to learn; they don't have to follow my lesson plan. The Speaking Buddy keeps track of the sessions through a teaching folder, which documents the teacher's interests and lessons covered.

PreAP English 2 teacher, Melissa Royer says, "I really enjoy being a part of the Speaking Buddy program. My Speaking Buddy, Deicy, has helped me to feel more comfortable speaking Spanish. It

has also given me the chance to get to know an ELL student and understand the challenges these students face in the school system. I hope I will be able to communicate more effectively with all my Spanish speaking students as a result of the time I spend with Deicy."

Speaking Buddy, Deicy, says, "My opinion regarding the Speaking Buddies is that it is a good program for everyone. In this program teachers develop their Spanish skills little by little, while at the same time, you teach teachers to be bilingual."



Initially, this program was designed to have teachers meet once a week after school where we went over the weekly lesson. The next day, a Speaking Buddy would show up to do the lesson with the teacher.

This design did not work well because most teachers do not have the time to meet after school due to clubs, sports, and teacher meetings. So the after school teacher meetings were replaced by computer technology while Speaking Buddies still remain the primary method of learning Spanish for teachers.

On our school's shared hard-drive, I created a folder for our faculty Spanish class. The folder contains Microsoft Word files with the lessons written out.

The folder also contains quality voice recordings of the lessons in Spanish. A teacher can listen to any lesson in Spanish at any time and as many times as he or she needs. This technology also allows for individualization. For example, our soccer coach has her soccer commands recorded in Spanish in her own subfolder. She can listen to them before any game or practice to refresh her Spanish.

Akins is creating a win-win situation. Teachers benefit by learning Spanish; ELL students benefit from establishing academic relationships with regular education teachers. Students have their culture, language, and educational backgrounds validated; content area teachers become more

effective ELL teachers. Most importantly, teachers and students begin to break the linguistic and cultural barriers that keep our teachers and ELL students from achieving maximum success in school and on the state exams.

Let's give credit to the Akins Speaking Buddies and the Akins teacher participants for making positive changes to their learning community!

Mr. Raymond teaches in the Austin Independent School District and works to enact innovative changes to better educate ELL students. He has 25 years of experience and is certified in English, Spanish, Bilingual, and ESOL.

Socio-political Concerns Update by Lu Zeidan

In this April issue of the TexTESOL III Newsletter, we would like to bring to your attention the following socio-political issues of concern to our field.

- 1. Adult Education Funding:** One adult education/ESL issue of concern to many groups is House Bill #1629, which proposed to transfer adult education and literacy programs from the Texas Education Agency to the Texas Workforce Commission. This bill would mean, starting this September 2007, TWC would administer the adult education programs in the state. One problem many adult educators find with this is that ESL classes will then have a pure employment focus and many adult learners are not in these classes for employment purposes. As of March 14, 2007, the bill was left pending in the Economic Development Committee.
- 2. Funds:** An ongoing concern for most adult educators is the amount of funding devoted to this category of learning. Texas has not increased funding for adult basic education in nearly a decade, allocating \$6.8 million each

year for the last 9 years. By comparison, other states with large numbers of non-English speakers spend considerably more. Florida provides \$299 million for adult basic education and California provides \$644 million, according to the Texas Border Coalition.

- 3. Naturalization Exam:** A new citizenship exam is being developed and tested in various parts of the country. Adult educators who teach civics classes that prepare students for the test they have to pass to become citizens are concerned that the test may be made too difficult or may rely on testing skills many applicants do not have. The new test is set to take effect in spring 2008. There are 10 pilot testing sites; among them are one in San Antonio and another in El Paso. For details, check <http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/FactSheetNatZTest113006.pdf>
- 4. Citizenship:** Citizenship fees are set to rise this year, however the Citizenship Promotion Act, introduced by Senator Barack Obama and Representative Luis Gutierrez (both D-IL) (bill

S. 795 and H.R. 1379) would freeze immigration fees at their current level and require USCIS to reevaluate how it calculates fees. The bill would specifically authorize Congress to provide funding to USCIS, which had been arguing that it needs to raise fees because it cannot ask Congress for funding. The bill would also require that USCIS administer

the citizenship test uniformly, while providing due consideration to the education and other circumstances of the applicants and establish a national New Americans Initiative, authorized at \$80 million per year to promote citizenship and fund community efforts to assist immigrants with their citizenship applications. The text of the bill is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov>

The Seattle Experience – TESOL 2007

It was a wonderful week at the 2007 TESOL Convention in Seattle. The joy of exploring this new city, with all its hills and rain, reconnecting with colleagues from all over the globe, and gaining new inspiration from sessions marked the climax of every day we spent in beautiful Seattle.

Attending the conference with a mission to inform our TexTESOL III members and to build up our organization, we began our week on Tuesday at the Affiliate Leadership Workshop, where Denise Murray, former TESOL President, gave a presentation about how to identify the stakeholders of our organization and how to successfully adapt to change within, a timely topic as our field faces many professional and legislative changes. After Denise's talk, the TESOL affiliates from around the world broke out into different workshop sessions, and we participated in different topics that were particularly pertinent to TexTESOL III. At the Membership Recruitment session, Katherine noted many engaging ways other affiliates shared with regards to recruiting and rewarding members, while Fu-An gathered and exchanged ideas at the Affiliate Newsletter session. Later in the week, Fu-An attended a longer Affiliate Editors' Workshop, where TESOL specified resources available for their affiliates' newsletters. Our TexTESOL III newsletter has the goal of benefiting our TexTESOL III membership, and we look forward to incorporating exciting components that address your needs and interests. We welcome you to write

to our newsletter editor, Danielle Bragaw, at mbragaw@austinisd.org

On Thursday, Katherine attended the Affiliate Assembly, where TESOL affiliates received updates on TESOL matters, presented concerns before the Affiliate Council, and voted for or against endorsements to various TESOL proposals. On Friday, she also attended TESOL's Annual Business Meeting, where Sandy Briggs assumed her position as TESOL's new President and Jun Liu the role of Past President. In addition to gaining much from meetings and workshops, we were also able to catch up with representatives from the other Texas affiliates at the TexTESOL Council of Presidents meeting. We discussed continued collaboration in Texas and the upcoming 2007 TexTESOL State Conference in Galveston. TexTESOL IV, the host of this year's conference, has an exciting program planned and invites you to mark your calendars (October 25-27, 2007), continue checking the website, and consider submitting a proposal (<http://www.textesol.org>). We look forward to participating, volunteering, and seeing many of you there!

The featured speakers for this year's TESOL conference delivered a series of thought-provoking speeches. The opening plenary of Betty Azar, author of the Azar grammar books, touched upon the "tides of change" within the ESL profession throughout her years of teaching experience. She

emphasized the usefulness of the hybrid approach to teaching methodology (not subscribing to only one, not excluding those of the past) and teaching to the needs of the students (not the dictates of a certain methodology). The closing plenary, facilitated by Douglas Brown, consisted of a panel of speakers: Betty Azar, who urged us to engage in meaningful communication with different cultures; Diane Larsen-Freeman, who focused on a collective sense of responsibility, enabled by a bottom-up approach to advocacy and change; Jun Liu, who challenged us to empower ourselves as ESL teachers through our professionalism; and Ron Carter, who inspired us to play with language and not ignore the interpersonal aspect of English that reaches beyond its pragmatic function in business and academics.

In addition to the focus on TexTESOL issues, we also had our individual focuses on language assessment, adult education, and teacher training. We list below the various presentations we attended throughout the conference. We would be happy to receive emails from you and share information based on handouts, notes, and memory. Katherine Fouché kfouché@austin.utexas.edu; Fu-An Lin flin@mail.utexas.edu.

- Affiliate Issues
 - *Affiliate Editors' Workshop*
 - *Affiliate Leaders in a Changing World* (Denise Murray)
 - *Affiliate Newsletter for Changing Times*
 - *Developing Leadership at the State Level*
 - *Membership Recruitment*
- *Assessing Communicative Ability of Non-Native Speakers*
- *Creating Listening Activities that work!* (Randall Davis)

- *Creating User-Friendly Rubrics for the Language Classroom*
- *Effective Tasks in Oral Fluency*
- *Global Changes and Perspectives on Communicative Language Teaching* (Douglas Brown, Betty Azar, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Jun Liu, & Ron Carter)
- *Helping Students Pass the Naturalization Interview*
- *Multi-level Tree for ESL Assessment*
- *National and State Initiative in Adult ESOL*
- *Teaching amid Change: Perspectives from 42 Years in ESL* (Betty Azar)
- *Toward More Principled Language Teaching* (Douglas Brown)
- *Understanding the Basics of the Naturalization Process*
- *Using Moodle to Enhance Listening/Speaking Skills*
- *What You Should Know about Teaching Conversation* (Keith Folse)
- Poster Sessions
 - *EL Civics Task-Based Projects*
 - *Japanese University Students' Attitudes Toward World Englishes*
 - *Effective Use of Volunteers in Adult Education*
 - *Authentic Speaking Activities*
 - *The ABC's of Authoring Online Listening Activities*

See you in Galveston!

Respectful submitted,

Fu-An Lin
Katherine Fouché

Call for Newsletter Submissions

Do you have some thoughts on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages? Do you have personal stories to share that are related to TESOL issues? Do you have helpful tips for other TESOLers? If you do, please consider submitting an article to TexTESOL III Newsletter. Submission deadlines:

Submission	12/1	3/1	6/1	9/1
Publication	1/15	4/15	7/15	10/15

Visit <http://www.textesol.org/region3/> for submission types and guidelines.

Website Review

Website URL: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/esl/computer/>

Name: ESL Services - UT Austin (computer lab page)

Audience: ESL students (adults, college students) and ESL educators

Cost: free

The website has links for multiple language and academic skill areas. The listening section has modified English. It is possible to choose between American and British English and real and modified English for learners. Focusing on good pronunciation, the speaking section provides exercises on sound pronunciation, minimal pairs and syllabic stress. Grammar, which is the skeleton of a language, is offered through enjoyable activities and games. The writing section helps the user to edit for spelling and grammar while addressing different types of writing such as business letters, resumes, and essays. Exercises in reading newspapers, proverbs, short stories and even clubs readings are found in the reading section of the webpage. "The more vocabulary you know, the more you will understand," says my reading teacher. A vocabulary section, filled with quizzes, exercises and academic word lists, is provided by the website. You learn how, when, and where to use words as well as synonyms and antonyms. There is also a section that gives definitions and explanations of idioms and slang.

To sum up, the best part of this webpage is that it has links from various universities, newspapers, and radio programs from across the U.S. It concentrates on Standard English and helps you to understand some items of American culture and the cultures of other countries through its activities. So far, this website is my English instructor when I am studying English on the Internet.

Reviewer: Adilson Alfredo, a government-sponsored student from Angola, is currently studying English at ESL Services. He is applying to UT's undergraduate program in Petroleum Engineering.

Calendar of Events

May, 2007

22-26. CALICO 2007, Texas State University, Web site: <https://calico.org/>

June, 2007

1-29. School for International Training (SIT) TESOL Certificate Summer Intensive Course, International Language Center, San Antonio, TX. Web site: <http://www.globaltefl.org/sanantonio.html>

22-23. TESOL Academy 2007, Boston University, Boston, MA. Web site: <http://www.tesol.org>

October, 2007

3-6. TABE 2007 Conference, San Antonio, TX. Web site: <http://www.tabe.org/>

13. TextESOL III Regional Fall Conference, Austin, TX. *More details coming soon.*

25-27. TextESOL State Conference, Galveston, TX. Proposal submission deadline: August 31. Web site: <http://www.textesoliv.org>

What's New from TESOL

At its meeting in March, the TESOL Board of Directors approved two new position statements on the status and rights of teachers and on the identification of English language learners with special educational needs. The following are excerpts from the position statements. For more information, visit the [TESOL Position Statements & Papers](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=32&DID=37) page at www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=32&DID=37

Position Statement on the Status and Rights of Teachers

TESOL supports the following rights of all members of the teaching profession:

- Working conditions that will best promote effective learning and enable teachers to concentrate on their professional tasks, including resources necessary for their teaching as well as protection in terms of occupational health and safety.
- The freedom to exercise the civic rights generally enjoyed by all citizens. The participation of teachers in social and public life should be encouraged in the interests of the teachers' personal development, of the education service, and of society as a whole.
- Following the United Nations *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (article 17), the right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, home, or correspondence.
- Freedom from any form of discrimination on the grounds of race; ethnicity; nationality; language background; disability; health/medical condition, including HIV/AIDS; age; religion; gender; gender identity; and sexual orientation in aspects of teacher preparation and employment.
- Reasonable remuneration and benefits equivalent to professional qualifications, comparable to employees of similar skills and educational levels in other areas of enterprise, with compensation paid in a complete and timely manner.
- Continual professional development opportunities in order to learn of new findings, develop additional expertise in their subject, and obtain continuous support for the improvement of their teaching methods.
- Professional and academic freedom to find the methods and classroom approaches that best meet the democratically decided objectives of the education system.
- The right to be consulted and to participate in the process of formulating educational policies at the institutional, local, regional, and national levels.

Position Statement on the Identification of English Language Learners with Special Educational Needs

In identifying English language learners with special education needs, several key issues need to be addressed:

- *Legal obligations*
- *Appropriate assessment*
- *Culturally responsive expertise and purposeful collaboration*
- *Clear communication with family members*



Different Languages, Diverse Cultures
One TextTESOL!

OCTOBER 25-27, 2007

**THE GALVESTON ISLAND
CONVENTION CENTER**

Visit our website to register
or contact us for more information.

www.textesoliv.org



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